

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

MAIL PROCESSING NETWORK
RATIONALIZATION SERVICE
CHANGES, 2011

Docket No. N2012-1

**RESPONSES OF WITNESS KENNY HAYES (NPMHU-T6) TO UNITED
STATES POSTAL SERVICE FIRST SET OF INTERROGATORIES AND
REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTION TO NATIONAL POSTAL MAILHANDLERS
UNION WITNESS HAYES
(USPS/NPMHU-T6-1-7)**

(June 6, 2012)

Attached are the responses of witness Kenny Hayes (NPMHU-T6) to the Interrogatories of the United States Postal Service (USPS/NPMHU-T6-1-7) filed May 23, 2012. Each interrogatory is stated verbatim and followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick T. Johnson
As agent for and authorized by
/s/ Kathleen M. Keller
Bredhoff & Kaiser PLLC
805 15th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

*Counsel for National Postal Mail
Handlers Union*

June 6, 2012

**RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL
SERVICE INTERROGATORIES**

USPS/NPMHU-T6-1: On page 2, lines 12 through 14 of your testimony you state:

[a]fter the Frederick consolidation into Baltimore, the Baltimore facility had major difficulties in handling the additional volume, particularly during the holiday rush.

- a Please produce any documents or data that you relied upon in support of this statement.
- b Please state the basis for any belief you may have that the current network rationalization initiative will involve the initiation of operational and service changes during the holiday rush season.

RESPONSE:

- a. Please see Attachment 1.
- b. I have no such belief.

**RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL
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USPS/NPMHU-T6-2: On page 2, lines 21 through 23 of your testimony you state:

The Richmond P&DC, which has already absorbed the mail from Charlottesville and is scheduled to also receive the mail volume from Norfolk, has also been struggling to handle this increased mail volume.

Please produce any documents or data that you relied upon in support of your assertion that the Richmond P&DC has been "struggling" in absorbing mail from Charlottesville.

RESPONSE:

Please see the documents attached as Attachment 2, including articles regarding Richmond's difficulty in absorbing the mail. In addition, there was a report by the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General regarding the Richmond P&DC, which found an increase in delayed mail of more than 139%, while similar sized facilities decreased delays over the same time period, and also found that the Richmond facility was understaffed by approximately seventy craft positions following the Charlottesville consolidation. This report is publicly available at:
http://www.uspsoig.gov/foia_files/NO-AR-11-008.pdf.

RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE INTERROGATORIES

USPS/NPMHU-T6-3: On page 2, lines 23 through 26 of your testimony you state:

[o]ur Local, which is based in Richmond, sent a mailing to local members, and it took over a month for some members to receive the mailing. Although this is an extreme example, this is consistent with other complaints that we have been hearing regarding slow processing and delivery time.

- a Please describe, in detail, and provide copies of records, that would indicate the nature of the mailing sent by your Local to its members, including but not limited to a physical description of the mail pieces, the date when the mail was entered, the mail class or product paid for, the level of presortation involved, the applicable service standard, the number of pieces mailed, the address management techniques and software used in connection with the mailing, and any contemporaneously recorded tally of the percentage of pieces delivered within standard, as well as those for which delivery took over a month. Please provide copies of all communications between your Local and the Postal Service regarding this mailing.
- b. Based upon your exposure to mail processing, transportation, and delivery, would you agree that the late delivery of a mailpiece by a month can result from mail processing or delivery personnel errors beyond the ability of postal management to control? If you do not agree, please explain your response.
- c Please describe, in detail, the nature of the “other complaints” that are consistent with the extreme example you reference in your testimony. In doing so, identify the individuals who received the complaints, the mode of communication by which each complaint was received, and the month and year during which each complaint was received. Please also provide copies of any contemporaneously recorded summaries of these complaints, identify the origin/destination of the mail pieces involved, the mail class or product involved, and the month and day of both mailing and receipt.

RESPONSE:

- a. This was a three page letter to all Local members, sent on June 30, 2011, by bulk mail. It was not pre-sorted. There is no contemporaneously recorded tally of the percentage of pieces delivered within standard. I did not communicate with the Postal Service regarding this mailing.
- b. I would not agree that mail processing errors are beyond the ability of postal

**RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL
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management to control.

- c. Please refer to the Postal OIG report, and the numerous news articles referenced in response to USPS/NPMHU-6-2.

RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE INTERROGATORIES

USPS/NPMHU-T6-4: On page 3, lines 1 and 2 of your testimony you state: "In my experience and in my region, there is not currently excess staffing, given the current volumes of mail."

- a Please describe, in detail, your professional training and experience related to the computation of adequate staffing levels at mail processing facilities and produce any documents or data that you relied upon in support of this statement.
- b Please state whether your statement applies to all postal employee craft and management position categories. If it does not, please identify the employee craft and management position categories to which your statement does not apply.
- c Please define the geographic scope of your postal work experience and the region to which you refer.
- d At current staffing and mail processing infrastructure levels in your region, by what percentage would current mail volumes processed in the region have to decline before you concluded that excess capacity existed?

RESPONSE:

- a. My experience is detailed in the first paragraph of my testimony. My testimony is based upon my many years of experience as a Mail Handler, my years of experience representing Mail Handlers in the mid-Atlantic states, and my common sense. In particular, I have been involved in the processing of a number of grievances arising out of the National Agreement involving staffing levels and excessing. As a union official, I am also very familiar with the patterns that arise when a facility is not adequately staffed, which include cross-craft assignments, use of PSEs, and Postal management going beyond the "overtime desired" list of employees to assign overtime to employees that do not wish to work overtime. I do not have any formal education or training in the technical fields referenced.
- b. My statement applies to craft employees, not management employees.
- c. I have worked for the Postal Service in West Virginia, and have represented Mail Handlers in West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland and the District of

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Columbia. "My region" refers to those five states.

- d.** I cannot predict a percentage. My testimony is based on my observations of the current staffing levels at the facilities at which I represent Mail Handlers.

RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE INTERROGATORIES

USPS/NPMHU-T6-5: On page 3, lines 6 through 9 of your testimony you state:

By consolidating facilities or lengthening the operating windows, I do not believe that the Postal Service will be able to significantly decrease the number of hours worked.

- a Please produce any documents or data that you relied upon in support of this statement.
- b Please state whether, in the nine AMP studies referenced in your testimony, the Postal Service provided calculations for the projected number of workhours at each of the losing and gaining facilities. If your answer is anything other than an unqualified affirmative response, please explain.
- c Please refer to the Response of USPS Witness Williams to Question Posed By Commissioner Taub During March 20, 2012 Cross-Examination, pages 5 through 9, which was filed on March 30, 2012, available at:
<http://www.prc.gov/Docs/81/81803/V2.p.422.HW.Dave.pdf>
<http://www.prc.gov/Docs/81/81803/Homework.Vol.2.p.422.xls>
Prior to filing your testimony with the Commission, did you have the opportunity to review and consider this response, including the information under the heading "Specific description of AMP savings calculations: mail processing workhours moving from the losing site to the gaining site?"
- d If you did not consider the materials identified in part (c), please explain why. If you did consider those materials, but disagree with the analysis and conclusions stated therein, please state the basis for your disagreement.

RESPONSE:

- a. None.
- b. Yes.
- c. No.
- d. My testimony was based on my experience working as a Mail Handler and representing Mail Handlers and was intended to offer the Commission the real-world observations of an individual who has worked in Postal mail processing, and represented many Postal employees working in mail processing facilities in the Mid-Atlantic.

RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE INTERROGATORIES

USPS/NPMHU-T6-6: On page 3, lines 15 through 19 of your testimony you state that at public hearings:

The Postal representatives...did not appear to be adequately informed to answer questions about the information and figures that they were presenting to the public. The Postal Service did not seem interested in public comments, and frequently cut off postal employees and union officials who tried to comment or ask questions

- a Please state the date and times of the public hearings, and furnish any notes or summaries that you prepared of those meetings.
- b Please state whether you personally attended the public hearings referenced in your statement. If you did not, please identify the person(s) on whose accounts of the meeting you rely.
- c Please describe, in detail, every instance where the Postal representatives referenced in your testimony were not informed or cut off postal employees, including but not limited to the identity of the Postal representatives, the identity of the postal employees cut off, the time and location of the public hearings where such incidents occurred, the specific information that the Postal representatives were not adequately informed to present, and the specific questions to which that Postal Representatives did not respond.

RESPONSE:

- a. The dates and times of the public hearings for AMPs within my Local's jurisdiction are available publically on the Postal Service's website. I did not prepare any notes or summaries of those meetings.
- b. As stated in my testimony, I did not personally attend the hearings. Union officers working under my supervision and reporting to me, typically the Branch President for the affected facility, attended the meetings.
- c. I did not keep contemporaneous records of the comments regarding the hearings, and therefore am not able to respond to this question in the level of detail requested.

RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE INTERROGATORIES

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE INTERROGATORIES AND REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTION TO NPMHU WITNESS HAYES

USPS/NPMHU-T6-7: On page 4, lines 1 and 2 of your testimony you stated that slowing mail to rural residents: “[i]s particularly troubling for the Postal Service, which is charged with providing service to all areas of our country.”

- a On what source of authority does your statement rely?
- b Please state whether your statement assumes that the Postal Service plans to generally implement slower delivery standards for rural communities, while maintaining faster delivery standards for all other parts of the country. If not, please explain your response.

RESPONSE:

- a. The first paragraph of the Postal Reorganization Act states: “The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities.” This basic principle is inherent in the Postal Service’s mission, subsequent legislation affecting the Postal Service retains this goal.
- b. My statement does not assume that the Postal Service plans to generally implement slower delivery standards for rural communities. However, by closing facilities in rural areas, local mail (“turn-around mail”) for these rural communities will necessarily be slowed in its delivery. As the Postal Service has stated, even with a two day delivery standard, some mail may be delivered in advance of the service standard. This is more likely to happen for mail that does not need to be trucked many hundreds of miles to be processed. In addition, the further the mail must be transported for processing, the more

**RESPONSES OF NPMHU WITNESS HAYES TO UNITED STATES POSTAL
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likely it is that it will not be delivered within the service standard.

Attachment 1

FrederickNewsPost.com

News Opinion Sports Business Art/Life 72 Hours Local Classifieds Special Sections Blogs Around FredCo Marketplace NIE

Fri, June 1, 2012

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Postal workers: Frederick mail piling up

Baltimore facility burdened after local plant's closure, trasferred employees say
Originally published February 05, 2012

By Courtney Pomeroy
News-Post Staff

Since Frederick's Tilco Drive mail processing plant was shuttered Nov. 18, the U.S Postal Service has said customers can expect the same level of service as before, even though local mail now travels to Baltimore to be sorted before being delivered.

But employees who were moved from Tilco Drive to the Baltimore plant say consolidating the operations was a mistake and has come at the price of timely, efficient service.

Three former Tilco Drive workers spoke to The Frederick News-Post on the condition of anonymity. The News-Post agreed to the request because of the compelling nature of the information and its widespread implications.

"It seems like Baltimore is more concerned with the Baltimore mail," said one employee, a Frederick County resident who worked at Tilco Drive for 12 years before he was transferred to Baltimore in November.

The News-Post in December asked post office customers who had noticed a delay in mail service to contact the newsroom. About 50 responses were received via phone and email.

'Weeks at a time'

Bins of mail have been "sitting around for weeks at a time in Baltimore," the former Tilco worker said.

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, he saw "a number of trucks" containing unsorted mail sitting outside the Baltimore plant, he said.

Freda Sauter, a postal service spokeswoman, said no unsorted mail was stored in the vehicles. They contained equipment, she said.

According to Cathy Powell, a spokeswoman for Baltimore's Department of General Services, the postal service purchased a \$2,000 permit, valid Dec. 21 through Feb. 1, allowing use of curb lanes for parking near the plant at 900 E. Fayette St. in Baltimore.

Adrienne Barnes, a spokeswoman for Baltimore's Department of Transportation, said the postal service was cited more than once for parking near the plant before obtaining the permit.

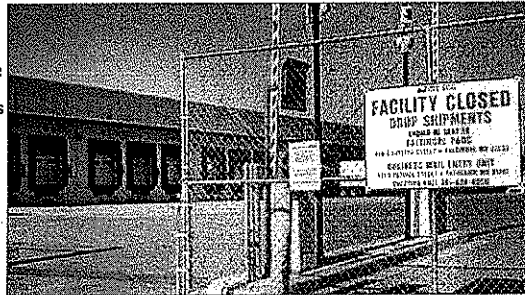


Photo by Bill Green

Frederick's Tilco Drive mail processing plant was closed Nov. 18. Local mail now travels to Baltimore to be sorted before delivery.

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"They did not have a permit for the meters or the detached trailers parked on the city public right of way, therefore they were cited several times for this infraction," she wrote in an email on Feb. 2. "After they were cited they obtained the proper permits."

Barnes would not say how many times or how much money was paid for the infractions.

A backlog of unsorted mail sits inside the building, too, the former Tilco employee said.

"They're still piling mail and equipment in the aisles," he said.

An anonymous tip about debris crowding the aisles and exit routes at the Baltimore plant was investigated Oct. 25, according to Leni Fortson, an Occupational Safety and Health Administration spokeswoman. Consolidation of the Tilco and Baltimore plants began in early October. An inspection for similar problems was conducted in June, Fortson said.

A \$5,000 citation was issued Nov. 1 as a result of the two investigations, she said.

Two former Tilco Drive employees who now work in Baltimore said the "debris" mentioned in the citation was probably unsorted mail.

"There were times when you would have to step over mail just to get where you were going because the aisle-ways were blocked," said a 15-year USPS employee who worked at Tilco Drive for 12 years before he was transferred to Baltimore.

"We have packages to this date that were mailed maybe a week or two before Christmas that are just now being delivered," he said Jan. 19. "The sheer volume of late mail is ridiculous."

'Not a priority'

Post office customers in Frederick County have noticed problems.

Jerry Markowitz, of Mount Airy, told The News-Post that medication refills he ordered in November from an online pharmacy in Florida were delivered to his home a month later.

Inger Talbot, a jewelry designer based in New Market, said pieces she sent to out-of-town, mail-order customers in early December had not reached their destinations two weeks later. She had to remake the pieces and resend them via UPS, which took money out of her pocket and made her business look bad, she said.

The News-Post received other complaints that described late or missing bills, insurance documents and invitations, sale flyers arriving after the sale was over and mail carriers arriving later in the day than normal, or some days not at all.

According to one former Tilco employee, managers in Baltimore say a lot more mail is coming from Frederick and Washington counties than their superiors told them to expect, before the consolidation.

As a result, "Frederick mail is just not a priority," he said. "It is definitely Baltimore first. Basically they're taking care of their own."

A 17-year Postal Service employee who worked at Tilco Drive for 12 years, said the consolidation has made it hard for her to move around in her new Baltimore workspace.

Equipment from Tilco Drive is crammed into the Baltimore building, she said, and sometimes she leaves work with bruises from banging into it.

She is frustrated by more than her physical working conditions.

Talk of the consolidation being transparent to customers is simply untrue, she said. "(The postal service) tells the public what they want to hear."

"If this move made sense, we all could deal with it," she said. "But they're winging it on a daily basis just to try to get it done."

'Through the cracks'

One Tilco veteran and a co-worker were processing newspapers in mid-December when they saw a front-page story about a snowstorm. They wondered how they had missed it, then realized the article was about snow on Oct. 29.

At least one local newspaper has had problems with delivery since the consolidation.

According to Julie Maynard, editor and owner of the Citizen newspapers, some papers printed on Oct. 12 didn't reach subscribers until Oct. 20. Customers usually receive papers the day after the edition goes to press.

By Nov. 22, some subscribers had not received papers printed Nov. 9, she said.

Maynard changed the printing of her weekly papers from Wednesday to Tuesday in an effort to get them to subscribers by Thursday. This makes the information in the papers less timely, she said.

"I sure do miss Tilco Drive," she said.

The Postal Service maintains that the plant's closure was necessary.

The Baltimore District processed 1.5 million pieces of mail per day five years ago, Sauter wrote in an email. That number, including Frederick's mail, has declined to 550,000 pieces per day.

"And now we are going into our slow season. This means the mail volume will continue to decline. Are we worried? Yes. And that's why we need to make the necessary changes."

Sauter admitted to problems during the fall and holiday season, but said customer service has remained excellent.

The overnight service score for the area is 97.16 percent, higher than the national goal of 96 percent, Sauter wrote. Despite the Frederick-Baltimore consolidation, "local First-Class Mail letters that are mailed to local addresses should be delivered the next day."

According to the USPS website, first class mail includes cards and letters.

In an independent experiment, The News-Post mailed letters Dec. 20 to its Ballenger Center Drive office from 16 post offices around the county. Each letter was dropped before the office's latest posted pickup time.

All the letters arrived on Dec. 22.

'It's not timely'

Postal employees who are concerned about the decline in customer service have also experienced internal problems.

According to the three former Tilco workers, the Postal Service promised to pay them for extra mileage resulting from their longer commutes during the consolidation period, before Tilco Drive was officially shuttered.

None have seen a dime of that pay, they said.

"Prior to November 19, employees were compensated for travel," Sauter wrote in an email.

"After the November 19 date employees were officially reassigned to permanent positions in other work locations, therefore they are not compensated for travel. We worked closely with the union in accordance with the union contract. If the employees have any issues with being compensated they need to work with their supervisor."

One employee's biggest complaint about consolidation is not the missing pay. It's the deteriorating mail service, he said.

"We took pride in getting our mail out on a timely basis -- and now it's not timely."

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Mother charged in infant son's death

Authorities believe a Frederick woman caused the death of her infant son last November.

Son of slain woman says 'Roc' killed her

A 9-year-old boy who witnessed the fatal shooting of his mother testified against the man charged with the crime Thursday and identified him as the killer.

Fire and Police Blotter

Two charged with drug possession

National Weather Service issues tornado warning, severe thunderstorm warning

The National Weather Service has issued a tornado watch for Frederick County, according to the National Weather Service.

National Weather Service: Severe thunderstorms may be headed this way

An umbrella might come in handy today as severe thunderstorms are expected to roll into Frederick County this afternoon, according to the National Weather Service.

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BALTIMORE—As the U.S. Postal Service braces for more cuts and postal office closures, union workers said the shutdown of the mail distribution center in Frederick is already causing major backups at Baltimore's main post office.

The Fredrick location closed on Nov. 19. That mail is now being transported to the main post office in Baltimore for processing and then shipped back to Frederick for delivery.

While it's usually busy this time of year due to the holidays, postal worker and union officer Rich Shelley told 11 News that the Baltimore distribution center is chaotic.

"We've had an influx of mail, and it's simply way over the capacity of this plant," he said. "Mail is backed up. There are trucks blocking streets all over the place."

Shelley claimed the changes due to the Frederick closure have caused significant delays.

"Mail is delayed to the point that there are loads of mail sitting in our yard that have been there for eight to 10 days. It never got to go in time," he said.

Officials at the downtown Baltimore post office said the transition has been challenging but denied claims of widespread delays in delivery.

"If there were any issues with any of our customers, we've worked with them," said USPS Communications Coordinator Yvette Singh. "Although we're going through transition during this busy holiday season, we do have extra mail to process, but we're still processing that mail and providing excellent service."

Postal service officials said the Baltimore processing center still scores above the national average, ranking 12th overall for delivery time.

Meanwhile, postal worker unions are planning a rally to protest the closures on Dec. 20.

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Closure of Frederick Mail Processing Facility 'utter disaster,' according to director of union organization

March 10, 2012 | By HEATHER KEELS | heather.keels@herald-mail.com



By Kevin G. Gilbert/Staff Photographer

The Christmas decorations were beginning to come down, the gifts long unwrapped and Thanksgiving dinner a distant memory when mail carrier Mike Shoop put Kohl's department store's Black Friday ads in the mailboxes on his route.

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"Dec. 28 I was casing these, and it was clearly marked on the pieces that they should have been in homes Nov. 19, 21 or 22," he said.

According to area residents, businesses and postal workers, delays of this sort have become common in recent months, and Shoop and other postal workers say they know why.

The November closure of the Frederick, Md., Mail Processing and Distribution Facility, which resulted in mail to and from 217- ZIP codes being sent to Baltimore to be sorted, has been an "utter disaster," overwhelming the Baltimore plant and leading to mail delays of, in some cases, more than a month, said Richard Shelley, who works at the Baltimore Processing and Distribution Facility and serves as director of organization for American Postal Workers Union 181.

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Shoop, a Hagerstown resident, worked at the Frederick processing center until it closed, then found a job as a carrier in another 217- ZIP code community. He spoke to The Herald-Mail about his concerns in a phone interview on a day off.

A spokeswoman for the Postal Service's Baltimore district acknowledged there were "some issues" during the transition, but said the Baltimore sorting facility has worked through those issues and has seen complaints decrease.

But members of Save America's Postal Service — an organization of postal workers and concerned citizens — say the issue is far from resolved.

Today, the group is holding a press conference and protest to launch a campaign to reopen the Frederick mail-sorting facility. Later this week, the group is holding two public meetings, including one Thursday at the Williamsport Volunteer Fire Department.

The issue is important not only for those who depend on reliable mail delivery to and from the 217- area ZIP codes, but as evidence of what could happen across the country if the U.S. Postal Service is allowed to proceed with plans to close at least 223 more processing facilities, organizers say.

'Financial crisis'

The proposed processing facility closures, estimated to save \$2.1 billion a year, are part of a larger Postal Service plan to reduce costs by \$20 billion by 2015, according to a Postal Service fact sheet.

"The Postal Service is in the midst of a financial crisis due to the combined effects of the economic recession, increased use of electronic communications, and an obligation to prefund retiree health benefits," the fact sheet says.

The Postal Service does not receive taxpayer funding.

In response to its "new reality," the Postal Service has proposed changes including lower service standards for first-class mail delivery times, closing and consolidating post offices and sorting facilities, and possibly even eliminating Saturday delivery.

The Brownsville and Big Pool post offices in Washington County were among the thousands of mostly rural post offices proposed for closure.

For now, many of those plans are on hold while Congress debates how best to address the issues facing the Postal Service. In December, the Postal Service agreed to impose a moratorium on closing post offices and processing facilities until May 15.

In a Feb. 14 letter to the Senate panel that oversees the Postal Service, 27 U.S. senators, including Maryland's Barbara A. Mikulski and Benjamin L. Cardin, said they had "serious concerns" about the Post Office's proposed changes.

That letter calls for a solution in which the Postal Service would be allowed to recover more than \$10 billion in overpayments it has made to its pension plans and would no longer be required to prefund 75 years worth of future retiree health benefits over a 10-year period.

Those payments have been cited by Postal Service officials and save-the-postal-service groups alike as a major source of the financial troubles driving cuts to service.

"The Postal Service is paying for health care costs that have yet to be incurred," a Postal Service fact sheet says. "These funds are set aside to pay for future health care needs for employees who are not even retirement eligible. It is an unreasonable financial burden given everything that is happening in the mailing industry."

Under inspection

Meanwhile, tensions are heating up over the effects of the Frederick processing center closure, which happened before the December moratorium.

In a February letter to the Inspector General of the U.S. Postal Service, Shelley and five other employees described chaotic conditions at the Baltimore plant that they said led to safety hazards and mail delays.

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Petition: Airline Workers

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Attachment 2

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A new pledge to fix late, shoddy mail

By Cortney Langley

Modified:

Saturday, January 21, 2012 8:33 AM EST

Originally Published: Saturday, January 21, 2012

JAMES CITY — County officials finally received a response after sending two letters to the postmaster general about shoddy and late service.

"First of all, I want to apologize on behalf of the Postal Service for the problems you have reported," Richmond district manager Jacob Cheeks wrote.

Problems center on the new mail processing facility in Sandston. He said, "There have indeed been problems with the movement of mail through the facility."

Issues seemed to domino.

"Just to inform you, but not to excuse our deficiencies, operations from six different buildings at our [Richmond] facility were moved to the new plant in Sandston," he explained.

Then the Charlottesville plant was consolidated with Sandston, prompting a redesign of the transportation network. Employees had to relocate from the western part of the state, "a number of whom decided to retire rather than commute." So Sandston was short-staffed.

Plans are to fix things.

* Forming an "Improvement" Team to find out where mail is getting hung up and fixing it pronto.

* Hiring a new plant manager "who comes to us with a proven track record of solving exactly the kinds of problems we have encountered," Cheeks wrote. "We have seen improvement since his arrival."

* Daily monitoring after an audit by the Office of Inspector General recommended changes.

* Hiring a new officer-in-charge at the Williamsburg post offices. She knows about the complaints. In addition to automated performance tracking, she has established her own internal log of mailings.

* "As an additional measure, to monitor our progress and to ensure its continuation, I now start and end my day at the [Sandston] plant," Cheeks added.

"We are not yet where we need to be, but I assure you and the citizens of James City County that we will not relent

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until we have met every deadline and achieved the kind of performance that our customers expect and deserve," Cheeks wrote.

"I would appreciate hearing from individual customers about any specific delays they are encountering. Please communicate to them that we would like to know exactly what they are receiving late at this time."

Having trouble? Contact Consumer & Industry manager Sandra Eaton at 804 775-6317, e-mail sandra.eaton@usps.gov or write to 1801 Brook Rd., Richmond VA 23232-9631.

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duane wrote on Jan 21, 2012 6:53 AM:

"How do we address any mail to 1801 Brook Rd.? To Ms. Eaton or to USPS?"

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late how about not at all wrote on Jan 21, 2012 11:22 AM:

"I am a responsible bill payer and therefore know what bills I have and when they are due. I am so glad I learned this responsibility because for two billing periods I have not received my utility bill from York Co. I have called their office to ensure the amount that I owe and I have paid on time, however this is unacceptable to not receive a bill. They have assured me that they are mailing the bills and this is a postal issue. Really USPS? Where are these bills sitting at and if I am not receiving my mail is someone else? Not something I should have to worry about...."

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Late mail wrote on Jan 21, 2012 12:29 PM:

"I have received two Christmas cards that were mailed in mid December this past week. Also, I regularly receive bills late."

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MamaG wrote on Jan 21, 2012 1:44 PM:

"I don't know where you all live but, I get my mail by 4pm everyday. On time and in good condition. Today, as I'm sitting here typing this, my mail person just put my mail in my box and it's only 1:30pm. I'm betting that those of you who are getting "bad mail service" are the type of people who complain when the line at the grocery store has more than 3 people in it and might have to wait an extra 5 mins to get through the line. It's called Karma. Try being a little more patient and nicer to people in your day to day life... and maybe your mail "issues" will resolve. As for bills get with the times... go paperless and do them online like 99% of everyone else does."

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Jo Krantz wrote on Jan 21, 2012 9:15 PM:

"Today I received a check from a tenant in FL that had been mailed and postmarked Dec. 28th, 24 days ago. We "complainers" have every right to complain, and have data and hard evidence to back up the complaints. If you get your mail on time, you're lucky."

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Postal Guy wrote on Jan 22, 2012 10:30 AM:

"People, it's only going to get worse. The USPS wants to get rid of all regular carriers and replace them with TEs. TEs are employees who get an hourly wage, no retirement or health benefits and are threatened with termination on a regular basis. You think the USPS cares about its customers. Think again."

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realist wrote on Jan 22, 2012 1:32 PM:

"I find it hard to believe that the USPS is really intent on improving service when they are about to permanently change their delivery standards to ELIMINATE overnight delivery and to institutionally add at least one or two days to the delivery time to first class mail and more time to other classes of mail, plus they are closing thousands of Post Offices and distribution centers across the country. What kind of "service improvement" options are these??"

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Postal Guy2 wrote on Jan 22, 2012 2:08 PM:

"realist and postal guy: You both are correct...they might as well take the name "service" off their last name. It's not about service. Just like every other business, it's about the bottom line, protecting the PayForPerformance bonuses with bogus numbers and data. The upper Mgrs have no idea what they are doing and frankly don't care, they get paid every 2 weeks and that's all that matters, no accountability, no skin in the game, and they don't get fired for poor performance."

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Qwerty wrote on Jan 22, 2012 3:29 PM:

"Old guys are funny."

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NBC12 Investigation

Audit reveals problems at Sandston mail facility

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Posted: Oct 27, 2011 2:44 PM EDT
Updated: Oct 29, 2011 12:52 PM EDT

By Rachel DePompa - bio | email
Posted by Eric Blackstock - email

RICHMOND, VA (WWBT) — A four month NBC12 investigation has uncovered major problems with the US Postal Service in central Virginia. A local postal worker is blowing the whistle and a scathing audit reveal the issues with your mail delivery.

NBC12 started getting calls and e-mails from many of you in June. The message was clear: There's something seriously wrong with mail delivery in Richmond.

Four months later, we have your first look at what was going on with your mail.

"It's just something you took for granted in this country," said Judy Anderson.

Rain, sleet or snow; you expect it. So did Richmonder, Judy Anderson.

"I ordered an item online from Utah," said Anderson.

That item never arrived. Anderson tracked the package to the Sandston Processing Plant. Her item went inside the building, and never came out.

"We subscribe to New Yorker Magazine. I've gotten five New Yorkers at one time, not having gotten any in the past month," said Anderson.

Netflix usually takes three days, but Anderson says she's waited two or three weeks for a delivery.

"What's happening out there? The distribution center? Are things stashed in corners or under piles?" Anderson asked.

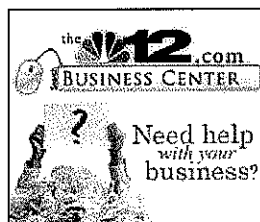
Anderson wasn't far off.

According to a long time postal worker, who asked us to conceal their identity, postal customers in Central Virginia were getting bad service.

"What's going on here, especially in this district, they need to take the service out of postal service," the worker said.

The employee told us, managers were wasting time and money. They said mail was being delayed; there were hold-ups at the processing plant in Sandston. They said customers were complaining and cuts to mail routes were leaving postal workers making deliveries well after dark, even at 8 or 9 p.m.

"It's a safety hazard," the worker said. "When you get into certain areas, I've



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Tornado watch for parts of Central Virginia

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 2:01 PM EDT

The National Weather Service has issued a tornado watch until 9 p.m. for the following areas in Central Virginia: Amelia, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico.

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been in certain areas where there's gunfire going on."

Back in June, the worker told NBC12 the office of the Inspector General sent a team to investigate the mismanagement and mail delivery problems.

"The mail is declining and there's less mail," the worker said. "And why is the mail service worse and people getting their mail late?"

It took some digging, but we uncovered the results of that investigation, an audit that pegs the postal problems squarely on the Sandston plant. That facility was delaying more of your mail than any other plant of its size in the country.

In 2010, 156 million pieces of mail were not delivered on time. Images from inside the plant show delayed mail sitting in a staging area back in June of this year.

Another picture from March 9 shows standard mail in a basket. That mail was two weeks old and still hadn't left the post office.

There's more. Newspapers printed in May, still stuck at the Sandston plant in June, undelivered.

There's even mail with the wrong color coding, a human error that causes it to be undeliverable.

Every bit of your mail goes through the doors of the Sandston plant. In 2010, the plant processed 1.2 billion pieces of mail, delivering to nearly two million homes in Central Virginia.

The Sandston plant opened in 2009, soon after the Charlottesville plant was closed and consolidated into the Sandston facility.

The audit blames understaffing, poor supervision, mistakes in color coding your mail, and too much wasted time running the machinery.

Since July, NBC12 has been asking for a tour of the Sandston plant, but were told two and half months later that headquarters will not allow our cameras inside.

However, the new plant manager did agree to an on camera interview.

Isaac Cronkhite was hired in June, brought in specifically to turn the Sandston plant around.

"We are making improvements every single day," Cronkhite said. "The mail is extremely important to us."

Cronkhite says he's fixed the same delayed mail problems at two other plants in the country. He says changes are being made here in central Virginia and that you should notice a difference soon.

A follow-up to this investigation will air Tuesday, November 1 in our 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. newscasts. We'll hear more from the Sandston plant manager, Isaac Cronkhite.

If you have a specific complaint or issue you would like addressed with mail delivery in central Virginia, you can call 1-800-ASK-USPS. That line is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

To see the entire audit, visit: http://www.uspsolig.gov/foia_files/NO-AR-11-008.pdf

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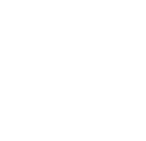
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Deadly Southside car accident

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 1:04 PM EDT

A car and truck collided just on Richmond's Southside Friday morning leaving at least two people injured. The driver of the truck said he was headed down Old Westham Road when a car traveling down Cherokee

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Three arrested in Southside teen homicide

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 12:10 PM EDT

Three people are behind bar in the shooting death of a teen on Richmond's Southside, according to Richmond Police. 19-year-old Orlando J. Shaw was shot and killed around 5:30 p.m. Thursday on Bonmark

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Hanover courthouse reopens after bomb threat

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 10:08 AM EDT

The Hanover General District Courthouse was shut down Friday morning due to a bomb threat. Police says someone called in the threat to the courthouse. An investigation is now underway.

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Reward offered in racist church vandalism

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 8:42 AM EDT

The FBI and Richmond Police Department are now offering a reward for any information that can lead to an arrest in a vandalism case from 8 months ago. Southampton was covered in racist and offensive graffiti.

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"Lincoln" movie brings in big bucks to Central Virginia

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 8:21 AM EDT

The production of Steven Spielberg's "Lincoln" movie brought millions of dollars to the area. According to the Virginia Film Office, the economic impact for the Richmond and Petersburg areas could swell

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Teen killed leaving church mourned, driver charged

Updated: Jun 01, 2012 8:19 AM EDT

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Richmond Office Source of Continued Mail Problems

By Desiree Parker

Tuesday, November 29, 2011



Excessive delayed mail in Richmond's staging area, photo from a recent audit of the office.

James City County has sent another letter of complaint to the Postmaster General about consistently slow delivery in the area. The problem originates in the Richmond office, which, according to a recent government audit, has the highest percentage of delayed mail compared to other similarly sized facilities.

The county sent a letter last week, the second in a series expressing the "continued frustration" of the Board of Supervisors. County Administrator Robert Midey wrote in the letter that magazines, catalogs and promotional mail have been arriving late for several

years. Invitations and political mail have also been arriving late, he said.

Board Chairman Mary Jones said, "Citizens depend on reliable mail delivery," and that stems from problems in Sandston, the Richmond-area distribution center. "For businesses that use the mail to promote their services, it is especially frustrating and affects their profitability," she said.

Board Member Jim Kennedy said during the 2008 election, some of his campaign mail arrived late after the election; this year, some Republican candidates' mailers also arrived significantly late, he noted.

According to a recent audit of the Richmond distribution center by the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Postal Service, the Richmond office had the highest percentage of delayed mail compared to similar-sized facilities. (Read the report in its entirety [here](#)).

According to the report, the Richmond office "experienced difficulties with the timely processing of mail" in fiscal year 2010 and the first quarter of 2011 that led to "significant mail delays and service declines."



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Delayed mail volume at the Richmond location increased significantly over the last couple of years, the audit found. Delayed mail volume rose from more than 22.6 million pieces in the first quarter of 2009 to approximately 54.2 million pieces in the first quarter of 2011. This was a 140 percent increase, while similar-size facilities decreased delays by 3 percent and all national facilities decreased by 2 percent during the same period.

The main causes for the excessive delayed mail in Richmond were "inadequate staffing and supervision, low mail throughput on machines, failure to consistently color-code arriving mail, inaccurate identification and reporting of delayed mail," along with mail damage from poorly packaged mail, according to the audit.

Management has started taking corrective action, including filling vacant positions and hiring a new plant manager as well as creating a team to address problems and developing new sorting and tracking systems.

The Inspector General's office will be monitoring the issue, the report noted.

U.S. Postal Service spokeswoman Freda Sauter told WYDaily that "the Richmond District has been faced with a lot of challenges and a plan to remedy this situation has been put in place and it is working. Is our service where we want it to be at this time? Not yet. However, we are confident that we have established processes that will better meet customers' needs and improve service."

"The Richmond District will continue to address the concerns raised by our customers. In addition, we find ourselves in the peak mail volume period - what we call Fall mailing season - and this is always a challenging time."

"Our customers can expect that the Postal Service is committed to providing excellent service and to addressing issues that are identified by our customers."

Customers can contact 1-800-275-8777 with any postal issues.

Comments